1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

843 431 firstlings), and was perpetuated long after the natives were converted to Christianity. After the food was removed, the pit of the oven was carefully filled in so that no rats could get into it, for if any food scraps were taken by a rat, the child would die. The father of the pregnant woman could make an earth oven and present it to the husband's relatives, but this gift had no ceremonial value.

DELIVERY

844 Before delivery a black stone was heated in an open fire, wrapped in bulrushes, and put under the parturient. This practice was supposed to stimulate labor pains (121, pp. 659-660). My informants did not give any information about this custom.

A woman in labor delivers in a squatting position. She kneels on the floor, reclining against her husband, who assumes the same position behind her. The husband or some other person assists the parturient by holding her under her armpits and massaging her stomach with both hands crossed on the navel region. Relatives and friends gather in the house to comfort the woman.

At the moment of delivery the man who ties the navel cord (*tangata hahau pito*) is called in. The tying of the navel cord is sacred and must be performed according to ritual (pp. 64-65). At the present time only five persons on the island know how to bind the navel; they are Juan Tepano, Mateo Beriberi, Timoteo Pakarati, Santiago Pakarati, and Leon Rahoroa. The first knot (*hahau a te matau*, string of the right) is tied after the string has made transverse turns around the navel cord passing from left to right. After three more transverse turns passing from right to left, the second knot (*hahau patu maui*, string of the left) is tied. These knots keep the child's strength in his body. The navel cord is cut by a boy or girl (*kope* or *vie nagi pito*, [465] young man or woman who bites the navel), who cuts with the teeth or an obsidian knife—formerly they preferred to bite it. The cord cutter was paid with fowls and sweet potatoes. Sometimes he received a young cock which he could not kill lest the strength of the new-born child be destroyed. He could give the cock to a foreigner, but usually it was allowed to die with age. [787] Generally the cord cutter must tell what he dreamed the night before. If he saw cows or stars it was a favorable sign for the child. Anything related to the skies was a good sign, but falling stars or any falling thing was believed [845] to portend ill-luck. Modern Easter Islanders retain this belief in the significance of omens. The word *topa-tini* is used for children that are born by breech presentation.

846 Most ceremonial customs dealing with disposal of the umbilical cord have become obsolete. In ancient times the wound was smeared with red ocher (*kica*) from a place called Te Tiamo, near Poike. Sometimes the umbilical cord and placenta were put into a calabash and taken to the shore by the

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

643 Now he makes the crayfish good to eat and the *poopoo* fish, the moss, the ferns, the *katukatu-atua* plants.
778 What does the king make fertile in the country?
The mosses, the ferns, the *katukatu-atua* plants, the king makes grow in the country.
533 Now he makes the mosses favorable, makes the ferns favorable, he makes the roots of
539 the *katukatu-atua* favorable.
What does the king make fertile in the country?
He introduces the tuna fish, the *atu* fish, and the *ature* fish.
Now he makes the tuna fish favorable, he makes the *atu* favorable, he makes the *ature* favorable too.
What does the king make fertile in the country?
The yams, the taro, the sweet-potatoes the king makes grow in the country.
Now he makes the yams, the sweet-potatoes, the sugar cane, the shoots favorable in the country, in the shade.
What does the king make fertile in the country?
The turtle, its abdominal shell, its legs—these he makes grow in the country.
Now he makes the turtle, its abdominal shell and its legs favorable.
What does the king make fertile in the country?
The stars, the sky, the heat, the sun, the moon, the king makes fertile there above.
Now he makes the sky, the heat, the sun, and the moon favorable.
What does the king make fertile in the country?
Going up, he makes the dew, the heat, the sun, the moon favorable.
Now he makes dew, the heat, the sun, the moon favorable.
What does the king make fertile in the country?
The chiefs, the chiefesses he makes favorable in the country.
Now the king makes the chiefs, the chiefesses favorable.
What does the king make fertile in the country?
Worms, earwigs, beetles, the king makes fertile in the country.
Now he makes the worms, the earwigs, the beetles favorable, he makes them grow in the country.

643 The first fruits of all the products of the land were presented to the king
241 with great ceremony (described by Roussel, 190, p. 360). "Only the king could initiate the harvesting of crops which were tapu as long as he ordered them to be."

643 Certain priestly functions related to nature were incumbent on the king.
782 In time of drought he must send his son or another *ariki-paka* to perform rites beseeching Hiro to make rain fall. It may be assumed that the king also prayed to Hiro for rain, that he had something to do with the fertilizing of the fields, and that his power was beneficial to chickens.

SUPERVISION OF SEMI-RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

643 Assisted by a priest, the king had to eat in every house before it could
845 be occupied by its owners. He also had to perform rites on a new boat. All
553 twins were presented to him to be given a "royal name." I was unable to
342 obtain details about this name or the mystical beliefs connected with twins.

Tradition tells that the recently tattooed young men gathered in Anakena
643 and exhibited their designs to the king who sat on the head of an old image
304 to examine them. If he was satisfied with the work of the artist, he said to the young man, "Ka hoa ki Tuna-roa" (Go to the ahu Tuna-roa), but if he

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

off. So he went to Ngaara, who told him to bring ten coconuts, which he broke and put in pieces of the sacred tree, "ngau-ngau"; the spell blasted the offender, who promptly died. Ngaara himself attended the inauguration of any house of importance. The wooden lizards were put formally on each side of the entrance to the porch, and the Ariki and an ivi-atua, who "went with him like a tatane," were the first to eat in the new dwelling: only the houses with stone foundations were thus honoured. The Ariki was visited one month in the year by "all people," who brought him the plant known as pua on the end of sticks, put the pua into his house, and retired backwards.

He also held receptions on other occasions, seated on the broken-off head of an old image, which was pointed out on a grassy declivity among the hills behind Anakena; these were special occasions for criticising the tattoo. Those who were well tattooed were sent to stand on one hill slope, whilst those who were badly done were sent to another; the Ariki and men behind him laughed contemptuously at the latter (which, as the process was permanent and could not be altered, seems slightly unkind). These receptions were also attended by men who had made boats, and by twins, to whom the Ariki gave a "royal name." Such children were not, as in so many countries, considered unlucky, but it was necessary that at birth they should live in a house apart, otherwise they would not survive. This superstition still exists. Shortly before our arrival a woman in the village had given birth to twins, for whom a little grass house was put up; another woman went in and brought them out to the mother to nurse.

The Script

Closely connected with the subject of the Miru clan is that of the method of writing. While we can only catch glimpses of the image cult through the mists of antiquity, the tablets, known as "kohau-rongo-rongo,"[1] were an integral part of life on the island within the memory of men not much past middle age (fig. 98). The highest authority on them was the ariki Ngaara. It was tantalising to feel how near we were to their translation and yet how far. Te Haha had begun to learn to write, but found that his hand shook too much, besides, as he explained, Ngaara

[1] Sometimes called koho-rongo-rongo.